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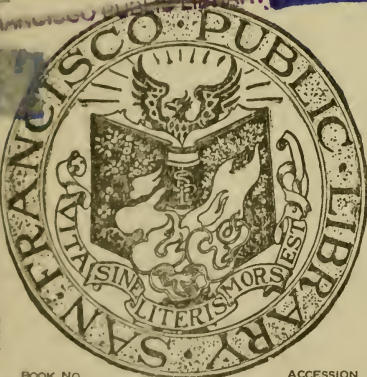
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JAPAN AND AMERICA

Justice To the Japanese

By REV. JAMES L. GORDON, D. D.

Minister First Congregational Church
San Francisco, California



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Justice to the Japanese

By REV. JAMES L. GORDON, D. D.,

Minister First Congregational Church,
San Francisco.

God is looking for a race which shall lead the nations of the earth. That race must have a world religion, a world language, a world policy and a world program. There are world problems which must be solved. There is coming on the scene of action a new race, an imperial race; a race imperial in the quality of its brotherhood, wearing the garland of a universal sympathy. A race which shall write the first lines of the world's Anthem and prepare the fabric of a universal ensign.

America, by the strange mixture and universal character of her population, would seem to be the chosen instrument of Destiny for the development of such an imperial race. But there is one cloud on our horizon and one shadow on our glory—it is Race-Prejudice. Prejudice is prejudgment.

Remember that race-prejudice is as old as the history of civilization. How prophetic, as well as historic, are the words of the New Testament writer: "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."

Race-prejudice! The Greek against the Roman, the English against the French, the

French against the German, the Irish against the English, the Mexican against the American, the Chinese against the Japanese, the black man against the white man, the Gentile against the Christian and the Christian against the Jew. Jesus Christ is being crucified, in America, to-day, between the two thieves of race-prejudice and commercial selfishness. Christ is dying, but the thieves are thriving.

Race-prejudice goes deeper than the skin. Of this fact, the Jew is the most outstanding historical illustration. The Jew represents an indestructible race. He has suffered infliction and affliction. He has been persecuted and prosecuted. He has been hunted and hounded. He has been beaten and bruised. He has been driven from one corner of the earth to the other and all the way back again. He has been the victim of Christian scorn and Gentile hate. For his limbs bigotry has welded fetters of iron, and for his brow intolerance has twined a thorny crown of hate. He has stood in the stocks, hung on the scaffold, burned at the stake; rotted in the dungeon, starved behind prison bars and been compelled to hide himself and his children from the unreasoning wrath of an unrelenting spite; but he has survived it all. And let it be said, to the credit of the two great wings of the Anglo-Saxon race—the United States and Great Britain—that England and America, for over one hundred years, have given the Jew his best opportunity for achievement and advancement, and the descendants of Abraham have not failed of either.

Americans! Can we not break the chains of tradition and dig a grave for bigotry?

* * * * *

In this article we deal with the Japanese problem on the Pacific Coast. This is not an unfavorable time for the enemies of Japan to precipitate an agitation. Japan is at the judgment bar. "Japan and Russia"—"Japan and Korea"—"Japan and China"—"Japan and Shantung"—Japan is assuredly in the spot-light.

It is well to remember, however, that there are two Japans. There are always two classes in every nation—the idealist and an opposing element. There are two Chinas, two Germanys, two Irelands, two Italys, two Englands, two Americas,—and two Japans.

There are two Japans: a Japan dominated by American ideals and anxious, if permitted, to follow American leadership; and a Japan dominated and inspired by that which was once known and spoken of as "German Ideals." Which shall it be—a Germanized Japan or an Americanized Japan? Japan and militarism, or Japan and democracy? Japan and China may be estranged at the present moment, but China is much more likely to follow the leadership of Japan than to fall in with the diplomatic suggestions of Germany or the United States. If Japan follows the leadership of America, and China follows the leadership of Japan, may we not hope that for all three the rule of gold will be exchanged for the Golden Rule?

It is also well to remember that Japan is an ancient nation, just throwing off the chains of

tradition. Ernest Renan exclaims: "What is the glory of America compared with the historic splendor of Florence, Pisa, Venice, Athens or Rome?" And if Renan could thus boast of the traditional renown of memorable cities and bygone empires, what must be the dignity of thought and the superb quality of emotion which grips the Japanese when, in silent mood, he contemplates the ancient history of the institutions, literature and ideals of the Empire of the Rising Sun!

To the people of California, I would venture a word of caution: Be not short-sighted in your statesmanship. Remember the warning of that great churchman, Bishop Butler, against "shortness of thought."

The world's last and best civilization will anchor its shipping in the great harbors of the Pacific Ocean. The future of California is linked with the Orient. The great civilizations of the East and the West meet at the Golden Gate. The greatest potential market in the world, for America, is Asia—the Far East, China, the Dutch Indies, Japan.

* * * * *

I have read very earnestly the literature bearing on the question of Japanese immigration in California. I have also talked with many business men in San Francisco with reference to the problem, and I have come to the conclusion that the criticisms that have been directed against the Japanese would, if applied to an American, be regarded as peculiar signs of industry, thrift, and genius for business.

In this article I will deal with some of the objections which have been advanced against the Sons of the Land of the Rising Sun who have found their residence on the shores of California.

1st: The Japanese is said to be an inferior race. Is it not odd that we Americans should speak of "an inferior race"? We are a people composed of all races, and we spend annually millions of dollars through our missionary organizations to evangelize just such races as we are dubbing "inferior." One cannot help thinking that there is a great deal of insincerity in our modern religious life. We spare neither money nor labor in evangelizing such races as the Chinese and the Japanese, but when they are found, in numbers by no means alarming, in our own country we dub them as "inferior." There is no nation or civilization, on the earth today, which cannot make a valuable contribution to our American experiment in democracy.

2nd: The theory has been propagated that the Japanese have come here to get rich, that they are mercenary, that wealth is their prime motive. As though this Japanese ambition were something totally un-American, something unholy, and therefore unknown among us! Were not the "forty-niners" attracted to California by an aspiration for wealth? Did they come here because they admired the scenery, the golden poppy, the Golden Gate, the golden sunset? Strange that an American should criticise anyone for wanting to acquire wealth when we are the richest nation in the world and are

making money now more rapidly than any other people.

3rd: The Japanese are denounced for their desire to acquire real estate, to purchase farms. Only yesterday we condemned them for sending money to Japan instead of investing it here. To tell them not to buy land is to tell them not to work. The real foundation of home, of stable life, of wholesome human existence, is land. These Japanese, who have come to these shores in compliance with our immigration laws, are here to stay. Is it the part of wisdom or justice to drive them from the soil to which they are naturally attached, and thus condemn them to a state of life which denies them both happiness and progress? Many of these Japanese have children who are American citizens and who are going to remain among us as members of our body politic. For the future welfare of these children it should be the right and duty of all parents to make due provision, and the surest provision one can make for his offspring is to secure land.

4th: It is complained that the Japanese have large families, and that the Japanese population in California is growing so rapidly as to endanger the safeguard of American civilization. I wonder where the Japanese got the idea of having a large family. Perhaps they have read the dangerous literature which has been produced by the pen of the late Theodore Roosevelt, pleading for large families! The real truth is that the increase in Japanese families in the

United States is not out of proportion with the increase of normal American families.

5th: It is complained that the Japanese women, wives of Japanese farmers, work in the fields. What a complaint! I lived in Canada when Russian immigrants were arriving in the Dominion. Thousands of these settled in Western Canada and brought with them the peculiar habits and customs of their race. In almost every case the wife was to be found toiling with the husband out in the field. Canadians regarded this as a beautiful example of coöperation in family life. Go to the South, particularly Texas, and you find the wives of European immigrants working in the field not only for Americans but also for Japanese farmers. In Ireland, in Germany, in France, in Russia, in fact in all parts of Europe, women working side by side with men on the farms is a common sight. Here in America married women are working in offices, in shops, in factories for a living, and I fail to see any difference between working indoors and working outdoors.

6th: They say that the Japanese works for less than the American. Nobody works for less these days. The Japanese is too shrewd to work in America for less than the amount paid to an efficient American. The reason why a great many American employers prefer Japanese labor to American labor is not because Japanese labor is cheaper, but because the Japanese as a laborer is easier to get along with than the American laborer.

7th: The Japanese is condemned because he insists upon sending his children to school. I presume that the reason why the Japanese are so anxious to go to our schools is because someone has discovered that they are "godless." There must be something strangely wrong with our American school system when it attracts the favorable attention of the foreigner. Time was when we used to sing of "A Little Red Schoolhouse on the Hilltop and No Saloon in the Valley." But really when such foreign immigrants as the little Japanese are anxious to become students in our public schools we imagine there must be something wrong with our whole school system. Strange that a little Japanese should be so eager to get a public school education, and stranger still that any American should be willing to permit the presence of children of any race in our country without the benefits of the public school.

8th: It is asserted, in a sense of reproach, that the Japanese want to associate with our best people, that they desire to get into "good society," and that they are even willing to enter into a blend of bloods so far as bringing Japan and America together in the most vital of social relations. This idea, entertained by successful Americans, that most people have an all-consuming desire to get into their social class, is the most amusing feature of our young and rapidly developing republic. There is nothing more astonishing in the history of civilization than the complacent spirit of the Anglo-Saxon. Of all nations the Anglo-Saxon is the most contented,

complacent, self-centered, self-satisfied, and self-sufficient.

9th: We are told that the Japanese are "deep." They conceal their thoughts. They speak in English but think in Japanese. If this be a Japanese characteristic, it is, of course, absolutely un-American. An American blurts out at once all his personal history. In the first hour of his social introduction to you you get the main facts about his family business, his successes and ambitions. An American physician said to me within half an hour after we had met, "Doctor, my income is \$20,000. If you doubt it there are my books." I could imagine no Japanese being so open. I am not sure that an American, doing business in Japan and expressing with difficulty his American thoughts in the Japanese language, might not be regarded in Japan as deep, secretive, and insincere.

10th: The Japanese evade the law, they say. They have a peculiar way of interpreting the law to their own advantages. No matter how you may make the law or word the law, they have some shrewd way of dodging and evading and accomplishing under one act that which is prohibited by another act. All this may or may not be true. But to our American ears this criticism sounds strange. We wonder how the little Japanese ever discovered the idea of playing with the law. Did he discover it from the liquor traffic of bygone days, or did he learn it from the legal transactions of some great corporations in our Republic—this art of playing with the law in order to gain financial ad-

vantage for one's self? Where could the Japanese have acquired this art? Is it not possible that they have secured their training in the matter of evading the law by too close an acquaintance with our American methods? Is it not remarkable that the things for which we criticise the Japanese are the very things which we regard as cute, clever, bright and brilliant, if accomplished by our own business man?

11th: We criticise the Japanese because they desire to become full-fledged American citizens. They are not willing to remain forever as aliens in America. They want to become American citizens and to have their American-born children enjoy all the rights and share all the duties of American citizenship. Strange that we should criticise in the Japanese that which we demand of every other race coming to this country.

12th: Alarmists would have us believe that these Asiatics will overrun the country. A friend asked me, "Doctor, would you want to see California overrun by Asiatics?" Listen to me, my friends; the Japanese have been in this country for sixty years. In that period foreign immigrants to the United States of America have totaled 27,000,000, and of these 27,000,000 only 101,000 have come from Japan. The dreaded destruction of America by the yellow race is mathematically absurd. The few thousands of Orientals to be found on the Pacific Coast—under immigration laws which are, and have been for years, fully as restrictive as necessity demands—are as a handful compared with the millions of Americans who will, in course of

five decades, surge from the Eastern states westward. And the Japanese population of San Francisco, controlled by the same wise and restrictive measures, will in fifty or one hundred years be altogether lost sight of in the growth and development of a metropolis whose proportions will then approach those of New York or London.

13th: Imaginative minds see the bogie of a Japanese conquest of America,—a commercial conquest. They say that there is a secret, well-planned policy and program on the part of the Japanese Empire to capture America for the commercial interest of Japan. I need only remind the reader that the German Empire, in spite of the fact that one citizen out of every five in the United States has German blood in his veins, and in spite of the network of spy system spread by the Kaiser over our country, utterly failed in its attempt to capture America for Germany—an attempt in which Germany was engaged not only during but before the war. If Germany, with all the advantages she had in this country, failed so ignominiously in this attempt, we need have no fear of the Japanese, whose handicaps are obvious to all.

14th: It is alleged that Japan does not allow foreigners to own land. Why, some people ask, should we extend to the Japanese in America a privilege which is denied the Americans in Japan? The answer is obvious. If the Japanese law denies us land ownership, the law is applicable not only to us but to all aliens. It does not discriminate against any single race or na-

tionality. In America we have millions, if not billions, of uncultivated land. Our land problem is an easy one, since there is land for everybody, and this may be purchased at the lowest rates known in history. Our population nowhere approaches the possibility of our land area. We have land sufficient in the United States of America to sustain a population of 1,000,000,000 souls, whereas in Japan, with its population of only 50,000,000 people, every foot of land is of special value and is being cultivated. In Japan they have had for centuries a serious land problem which has never existed in America and cannot possibly for a thousand years.

* * * * *

I have studied the Japanese from various angles, and I have yet to find a single objection that cannot easily be answered. What, then, is the matter with the Japanese? Is he charged with drunkenness? No. Is he charged with idleness? No. Is he charged with indolence? No. Is he charged with disloyalty? No. Is he charged with treason? No. What is the matter with the Japanese? Are there any Japanese I. W. W.'s in America? No! Any Japanese anarchists? No. Any Japanese bomb throwers? No. Any Japanese mob organizers? No.

Some months ago a ship sailed from our American shores on which our government had placed 247 aliens, and as this vessel receded from the shores of America the 247 undesirable aliens leaned over the side of the vessel and bade

farewell to America with the words, "To hell with America." I am curious to know whether there was one Japanese in that singular crowd of men and women.

Japan sent you a gift of gold when your city was on fire—\$250,000 was the measure of the gift. Did any other country in the world send San Francisco such a gift? During the war the Japanese in California subscribed \$2,000,000 worth of liberty bonds. Does that look like disloyalty?

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There are two remedies for the Japanese problem in California. The first is the remedy submitted by the politician, and the second is the remedy submitted by the statesman.

The politician, who is trying to keep in favor with an unsettled public opinion, submits the following: First of all exclude the Japanese from coming to America. Second, refuse to sell or lease land to them. And third, deprive the native-born Japanese in America of the right of citizenship. Personally I am opposed to any politician who advocates the criminal theory that a child of American birth should be robbed of the rights of American citizenship. I care not who his ancestors may have been.

THE REMEDY.

1. The fundamental principle to be applied in dealing with the problem of immigration is **the proper conservation of American institutions.** All classes of immigrants should be admitted to the country only as rapidly as they can be

properly drilled and trained in the art of citizenship.

2. The great problem of immigration should be dealt with as a national and an international problem. Local problems should be solved by national methods. Immigrants of a certain class undesirable in one section of the country might prove to be a geographical Godsend if properly distributed. Place the Japanese immigrant, if you will, on the broad acres of untilled soil to be found in America. We have millions of acres in the United States untilled and uncultivated. The Japanese are a nation of agriculturists and we need agriculturists in America.

3. We should always remember that the Problem of Immigration is closely related to the matter of international diplomacy.

The friendship of far-away nations may prove to be a jewel, cast aside ruthlessly by America's short-sighted politicians but picked up stealthily by some keen, quick-witted military genius of German or Prussian antecedents. The friendship of the world is essential to the future safety and prosperity of American commerce and New World possessions. Why unnecessarily insult, annoy, maltreat or provoke the enmity of Japan or China?

Is it not cheaper and easier to cultivate international friendship than to build and sustain vast navies and great armies?

The anti-Japanese initiative measure, which is to be voted upon at the November election, aims:

1. To prohibit land ownership by Japanese.
 2. To prohibit leasing of farm land by Japanese.
 3. To prohibit the acquisition of real property by American-born Japanese minors, who are American citizens, under the guardianship of their parents.
 4. To deprive the Japanese parents of their natural right to be the guardians to their minor sons or daughters owning real property.
 5. To escheat real property to the state upon certain prima facie presumptions.
 6. To prohibit the Japanese from taking any interest in any company or corporation owning real property.
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